



Early Journal Content on JSTOR, Free to Anyone in the World

This article is one of nearly 500,000 scholarly works digitized and made freely available to everyone in the world by JSTOR.

Known as the Early Journal Content, this set of works include research articles, news, letters, and other writings published in more than 200 of the oldest leading academic journals. The works date from the mid-seventeenth to the early twentieth centuries.

We encourage people to read and share the Early Journal Content openly and to tell others that this resource exists. People may post this content online or redistribute in any way for non-commercial purposes.

Read more about Early Journal Content at <http://about.jstor.org/participate-jstor/individuals/early-journal-content>.

JSTOR is a digital library of academic journals, books, and primary source objects. JSTOR helps people discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content through a powerful research and teaching platform, and preserves this content for future generations. JSTOR is part of ITHAKA, a not-for-profit organization that also includes Ithaka S+R and Portico. For more information about JSTOR, please contact support@jstor.org.

ART. V.—*Account of some Inscriptions found on the Southern Coast of Arabia. Communicated to the Bombay Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society, by the Government of Bombay.*

Read 18th of February, 1837.

THE accompanying Inscriptions were found in the neighbourhood of "Dees," a Bedouin town, a few hours' distant from Ras Sherma, on the southern coast of Arabia.

The natives who came off to the ship, represented it as a populous well-cultivated district, abounding in vegetables and fruit of various descriptions. Having learned from these persons, that there were many ancient buildings, and some writing in a character unknown to the Arabs, we naturally felt an inclination to make a personal inspection of them; and to effect this with security, Captain Huines sent our pilot, a native of the place, on shore, to request the ruling Shaikh to grant us his firman, and a few Bedouin attendants. In reply, a letter was sent off, making a most exorbitant demand of money, rice, copper, and sundry other very useful articles, specifying the individual quantities with much nicety and precision, as the price of his protection: this, of course, was politely declined; and from a subsequent conversation with some of the party themselves, they appeared not only to regret the exercise of their cupidity, which had deprived them of, at least, a few presents from the ship, but seemed to be sensibly ashamed of a conduct so much at variance with the hospitable treatment we had universally met with, since leaving Maculla.

We left Sherma without remarking anything further than the remains of two water-tanks, much resembling in form and structure, those we saw on the summit of Hassan Ghorab; there appeared also, to have been a fort and a small town on the point of the cape, but time had been so active in her work of destruction, that the traces merely were visible. At Gossyrh, we were more fortunate, and although the distance was greatly increased, it was deemed desirable to obtain some correct information of a part of the country, which, in all human probability, may never be visited again under such favourable circumstances, and which promised to prove so interesting in an antiquarian point of view. With the permission of Captain Haines, Mr. Smith and myself started from Gossyrh; and after a tedious journey of about fifteen miles, through a flat, barren country, we halted for the night about ten o'clock

P.M., under the ruins of a very old fort. Here we slept; and the following morning commenced our researches.

The Bedouins who attended us, unfortunately, knew nothing of either the ruins or the writing; but having recalled to our recollection the name of a Bedouin, who had been on board for medical assistance at Sherma, we inquired for his residence, which he had informed us was in the neighbourhood, and found him exceedingly civil and obliging, in showing us everything he considered might be of interest to us. Like all his Arab brethren, he knew nothing but what his own external senses had taught him; and, in common with them, he adopted the easy method of accounting for forts, tanks, inscriptions, &c., by ascribing them all to the superior genius of the Faringis, of whom they seem to have entertained a kind of superstitious dread. Of course, little else than the names of the places could be procured. The fort is called, Hassan el Meimeli, and from its size, the nature of the materials of which it is composed, and its form, appears never to have been remarkable for its strength or stability: it is now completely in ruins. After traversing some part of the neighbouring country, which is known by the name of Hammam, we at last came to Jebal Aaledma, where we were directed to look for the inscriptions. About half way up the hill, which we estimated about two hundred feet, we came to a spacious cave, on the sides of which, wherever a smooth surface presented itself, we discovered the traces of writing. Most of it was executed in a species of red paint, but in one or two parts, a black composition had been made use of. By the ravages of time, many of them were nearly obliterated; but in others, by wetting the surface, and removing the dust which had accumulated, the characters became much more legible, and in one part in particular, the colour became quite brilliant, looking as fresh as though it had been just laid on. Having discovered and copied those very perfect inscriptions on Hassan Ghorab, we were at once struck with the resemblance they bore to those now before us; and on a more minute comparison, the letters will be found generally to correspond, although there are a few here, which do not present themselves in the former. As it would appear that the style of writing is now entirely extinct, at least in this part of Arabia, it becomes a subject of speculation, by what persons they could have been executed. The characters certainly bear a stronger resemblance to the Ethiopic, than to any other known in the present day, and consulting the history of Arabia, we find, that prior to the Persian conquest of Yemen under Nushirvan, the whole of that fertile

province was under the sway of the Abyssinians, many of whom, having become enamoured of its beauties, permanently settled here. I think such are fair grounds for assuming, that these are the remains of that people, especially as we know them to have been an enterprising commercial nation, with talents and qualifications which fitted them for such a design as Hassan Ghorab, from the execution of which, the native inhabitants would have shrunk with despair. For a solution of these difficult questions, however, it will be more becoming in us to preserve silence, and leave them to the disposal of persons better qualified by their peculiar studies and more extended information on such points. I may here mention the coincidence of the names Hassan Ghorab, and Bait Ghorab the fort and family of Ghorab, which latter is one of the most populous and powerful tribes in the neighbourhood of Hammam. In questioning one of the tribes concerning the origin of his title, he told us his ancestors came from Hassan Ghorab, a place known to him by hearsay only. There are now many intermediate tribes between the two places, so that, should the information be correct, we may infer that this is merely a branch of that family drawn here by the comparatively fertile nature of the soil over that about Hassan Ghorab. With respect to the general features of the country about Hammam, it wears a most unpromising aspect, there being, to all appearance, nothing but barren hills; but on entering the valleys, the scene becomes suddenly changed, and the eye is once more gratified by the visible marks of cultivation, and the industry of man. In each corner of the valley may be seen a thriving date-grove, and sometimes pretty large portions of ground covered with taam, onions, garlic, sweet potatoes, and a variety of melons and pompions, one species of which is called the "Portugal," for what reason does not appear. The nebek and coca-nut thrive well.

After searching about for further curiosities, we left Hammam about noon, and instead of returning direct to Gossyrh, we chose a path nearer to the distant range of Assad, and after much fatigue, and some little risk, we arrived at the old fort of Maaba, about twelve o'clock at night. We were led to make this deviation in consequence of the character we received of the fort from the natives, who informed us it was composed entirely of hewn stone, and in a high state of preservation: a distant hope, too, of finding further inscriptions prompted us to visit the place. In our search for inscriptions, we were disappointed, neither could we learn from the people about, that there existed any. This, however, should

not damp a person's ardour in quest of antiquities, as many of the Arabs positively cannot recognise writing when they see it, if it differs at all from the modern Arabic. We saw an instance of this at Hammam. Having accidentally found a few characters engraved on a stone on the road-side, we immediately stopped to take a copy, while the Bedouins anxiously inquired, "Why we were writing the stone?" as they simply expressed it; and on being informed that we were copying the writing upon the stone, they seemed half incredulous about it. A short time after this, one of them took me to look at a stone, on which he said there was some writing; it proved, however, to be nothing but some natural marks on the surface of the rock; and when I told him this he laughed, and candidly told me he knew no better.

The Fort of Maaba to all appearance has been strong, and well constructed of stones and mortar, though the former are not hewn as we were informed they were. There are no embrasures for guns, but numerous loop-holes for muskets or match-locks. The plan of the building seems good for defence, and its position admirably chosen on a rising ground, in the point of convergence of three fertile valleys, well cultivated and thickly planted with date groves. It was said this was one of the castles that defended the market-road to Hadramaut, where there are many others of a similar description. The road still passes under the dilapidated walls. From hence to Gossyrh is about five or six miles.

In prosecuting the survey of the coast, we again heard of some inscriptions about forty miles to the eastward of Hammam. Lieutenant Sanders, Mr. Smith, and myself, with the concurrence of Captain Haines, started off for the purpose of copying them, after having previously examined the ruins of Hassan Misánáh, situated close to the beach on a gentle insulated eminence. The foundation-wall is now all that remains, the stones of which have evidently been hewn, and strongly cemented with mortar: everything around bears striking testimony of its antiquity. It has originally served for the protection of a village, the position of which can now be inferred only from the loose dark nature of the soil, and a few small fragments of glass and copper scattered here and there, so common a circumstance in most of the ancient towns on the Arabian coast.

A walk of about twelve miles brought us to Nakhal Mayuk, a very small date-grove, at the foot of the lofty range of mountains a little to the eastward of Wady Shakhowé. Here we began to ascend, and having attained an elevation of about fifteen hundred feet we

came to a spacious cave, in a part of which we found the adjoining characters, written exactly in the same manner, with red paint, as those at Hammam. Immediately underneath is said to have been a well, more probably a small reservoir for water, from its position and the dryness of the soil. It is now filled up with loose stones and rubbish. The surrounding country, with the exception of one or two very small date-groves peeping out from some obscure corner of a valley, is one unvaried scene of barrenness and desolation. We were told, however, that after a fall of rain, the scanty herbage which springs up was a sufficient inducement for the Bedouins to bring their flocks up to the hills, and during which time they inhabited this and any other caves which they found convenient.

Having slept here for the night, under the protection of a few Bedouins, of the Menahil tribe, we started early the following morning to return by the same dreary path which had conducted us on our pilgrimage.

(Signed)

J. G. HULTON.

J. SMITH.

14 41918084
 141718X83

0/149104

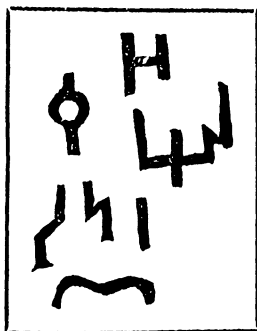
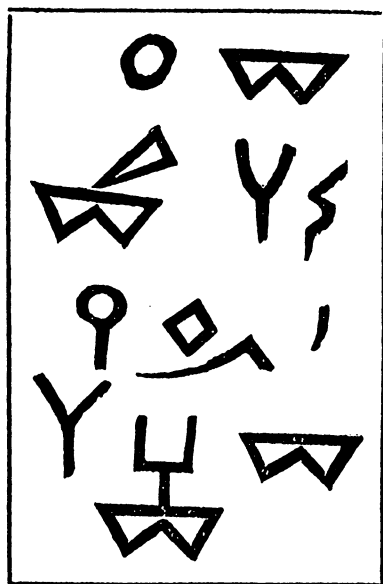
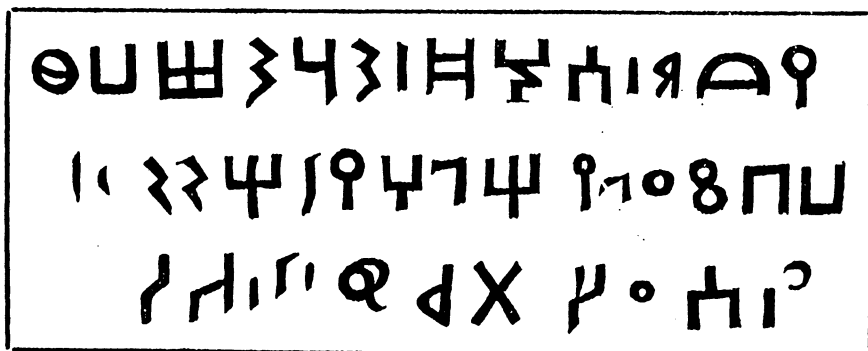
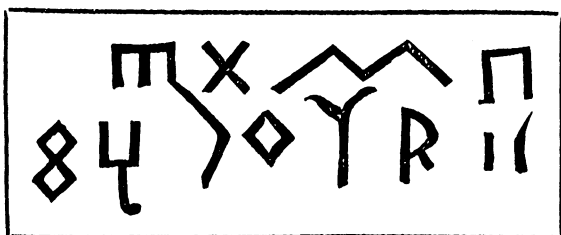
Defaced. 01881N3
 N418HH01/1

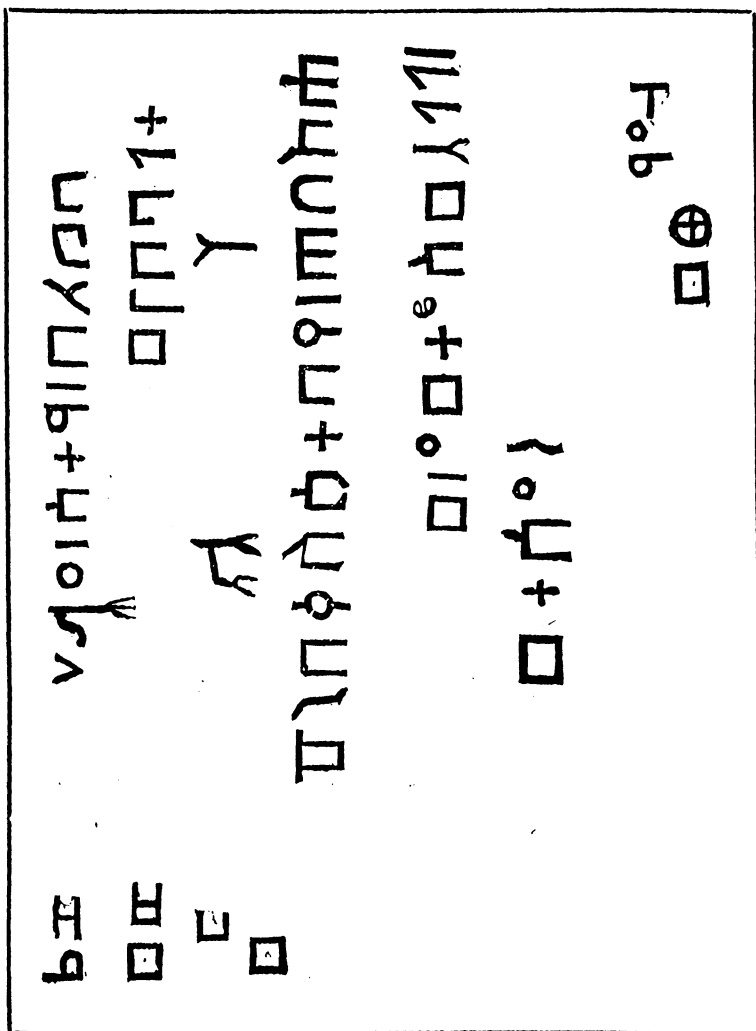
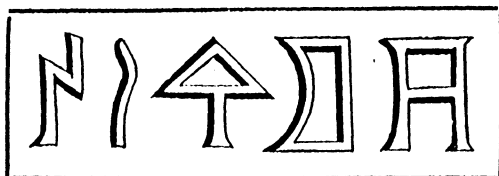
8X83

18183
 08184

0994
 x 4818
 4

3448





X° ΠΠ
 W
 AIA

V O
 Γ A
 A M Π

+ I M O

H H A I

ΛΩ~H I M Λ Z Π
 Π N Λ M K
 ○ ○ I I Λ ρ I (Π Π I Ω
 H Λ X σ □ + Θ H
 □ Θ I Π I H I Θ Ω ρ I
 + I Ω
 31/Υ

